

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT:  
MAIN STICKING POINTS IN THE CONFLICT,  
SUGGESTIONS FOR OPTIONAL SOLUTION**

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The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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## ABSTRACT

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Strategic issues in the Israeli – Palestinian Conflict. History and current issues, what are the goals of both sides. Ends, Ways and Means of the adversaries. and suggestion to resolve the conflict.



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## PREFACE

Contrary to some popular misconceptions, the Israeli Palestinian conflict does not go back to the biblical times. But at the 1880s, when the Zionist movement called for Jewish homeland in "Eretz Israel", the land of Israel, and began settling European Jews in Palestine.

After defeating the Ottomans in World War One, the British were given a League of National Mandate to control Palestine. In 1947, the UN passed a resolution calling for division Palestine into two states, Israel and Palestine. The Arabs did not accept the partition and broke out war to demolish the new state of Israel.

Since the establishment in 1948, the state of Israel has sought peace with its neighbors through direct negotiations. However, its efforts to reach out for peace and to open direct channels of dialogue were not met by similar efforts on the Arab side. Until the 1991 Madrid conference, only Egypt had accepted Israel's offer to negotiate face to face. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat accepted Prime Minister Begin's invitation for dialogue, and the two countries embarked a bilateral negotiation, which led to the 1978 Camp David Accord and the 1979 Israel- Egypt peace treaty.

The breakup of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War produced a change in the basic political order of the Middle East, prompting the Arab world to reassess its attitude toward Israel and to enter into negotiations to build a new future for the Middle East.

In October 1991, a conference was convened in Madrid to start direct peace talks. Subsequently, bilateral negotiations were conducted between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians, as well as multilateral talks on key regional issues.

This negotiation led foundation for peace treatment between Israel and Jordan, as well as the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. But still, since then, the disagreement between Israel and the Palestinians has not been solved.

Today, the sticking points between Israel and the Palestinian still provoke to the ongoing conflict. This paper try to describe the main problems between the two parties, their claims, the options of resolution, and probably, the way to embark on the right path for peace agreement.





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## **ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: MAIN STICKING POINTS IN THE CONFLICT, SUGGESTIONS FOR OPTIONAL SOLUTION**

“For too long, the citizens of the Middle East have lived in the midst of death and fear. The hatred of a few holds the hopes of many hostages. The forces of extremism and terror are attempting to kill progress and peace by killing the innocent. And this casts a dark shadow over an entire region. For the sake of humanity, things must change in the Middle East”<sup>1</sup>.

### **CONFLICT HISTORY.**

The conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews is a modern phenomenon, which began around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although these two groups have different religions (Palestinians include Muslims, Christians and Druses), religious differences are not the cause of the conflict. It is essentially a struggle over land. Until 1948, the area that both groups claimed was known internationally as Palestine. But following the war of 1948-49, this land was divided into three parts: the state of Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan river) and the Gaza Strip.

This is a small area: approximately 10.000 square miles, or about the size of the state of Maryland. The competing claims are not reconcilable if one group exercises exclusive political control over the total territory.

Jewish claims to this land are based on the biblical promise to Abraham and his descendants, on the fact that this was the historical site of the Jewish Kingdom of Israel (which was destroyed by the Roman Empire), and on Jews' need for a haven from European anti-Semitism. Palestinian Arabs' claims to the land are based on continuous residence in the country for hundreds of years and the fact that they represented the demographic majority. They reject the notion that a biblical-era kingdom constitutes the basis for a valid modern claim. If Arabs engaged the biblical argument at all, they maintain that since Abraham's son Ishmael is the forefather of the Arabs, then God's promise of the land to the children of Abraham includes Arabs as well. They do not believe that they should forfeit their land to compensate Jews for Europe's crimes against them.

In the 19th century, following a trend that began earlier in Europe, people around the world began to identify themselves as nations and to demand national rights, foremost the right to self-rule in a state of their own (self-determination and sovereignty). Jews and Palestinians both began to develop national consciousness, and mobilized to achieve national goals. Because Jews were spread across the world, their national movement, Zionism, entailed the identification and settlement. Palestine seemed the logical and optimal place, since this was the

site of Jewish origin. The Zionist movement began in 1882 with the first wave of European Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most Jews, living in Palestine, were concentrated in four cities with religious significance: Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad and Tiberius. Most of them observed traditional, orthodox religious practices. Many spent their time studying religious texts and depended on the charity of world Jewry for survival. Their attachment to the land was religious rather than national, and they were not involved in the Zionist movement, which began in Europe and was brought to Palestine by immigrants. Most of the Jews who emigrated from Europe lived a more secular lifestyle and were committed to the goals of creating a Jewish nation and building a modern, independent Jewish state.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was the first significant declaration by a world power in favor of a Jewish "national home" in what known as Palestine. The letter was addressed to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the Jewish community in Britain. It became an important arm of the movement to create a Jewish state in Palestine.

In 1947, the United Nation General Assembly decided on the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem to be an internationalized city – Resolution 181<sup>2</sup>. Jewish representatives in Palestine accepted the plan tactically because it implied international recognition for their aims. The Palestinians and Arabs felt that it was deep injustice to ignore the rights of the majority of the population of Palestine. The Arab League and Palestinian institutions rejected the partition plan, and formed volunteer armies that infiltrated into Palestine beginning in December of 1947<sup>3</sup>.

The surrounding Arab states invaded the new country of Israel at the day it was founded, and Egypt and Jordan took much of the territory that the United Nations had allotted to a Palestinian Arab state. Meanwhile, 750.000 Arab refugees fled their homes, leading to the bitterest dispute in the conflict's history: Palestinians, who refer to 1948 as *al naqba* ("*the catastrophe*"), say that the refugees were deliberately driven out during an Israeli campaign of ethnic cleansing. Israelis say that the Arabs' own leaders told them to flee to let the invading Arab armies wipe out Israel. Many Palestinians left the area during the Israeli independence war and became refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, the Gaza strip (under Egypt) and other spread all over the Arab world. One of the displaced was a young Palestinian student named Yassir Arafat (living in Kuwait), who established the Palestinian Liberation movement in 1959 with a vision to create a Palestinian state in all area of old Palestine. He got the decision to start the struggle based on violence and terrorism. During the years the PLO became increasingly more militant based on the agenda of destruction of Israel and replace it with Palestinian state. The terror

attacks included penetrations of small-armed units into Israeli villages near the borders and the killing of women and children, as well as attacking Israeli's embassies, airplanes, kidnapping, and more.

In the sixties, the PLO camps were located in Jordan, but they became a threat to the Jordanian kingdom, they were forced to leave Jordan in what is known as "Black September"<sup>4</sup> in 1970. The PLO then began rebuilding themselves in Lebanon. The PLO had opportunities to recruit from the Palestinian refugee's camps and free access to the northern border with Israel. The ongoing Palestinian terrorism in northern Israel forced Israel to invade twice (1976 and 1982) in order to destroy the Palestinian infrastructure, to stop terrorism, and to create the conditions for peace with Lebanon. Because of the 1982 war, the PLO, forced by the UN and US to leave Lebanon, and to move into Tunisia. Israel created a buffer zone in South Lebanon, with the assistance of the local Christian militia. This was done in order to prevent further Palestinian attacks and to provide better security to the northern villages, however it failed to change the political structure inside Lebanon because of Syrian involvement. Despite the attacks Israel decided to withdraw unilaterally from South Lebanon in May 2000.

In the spring of 1967, in six days of sharp fighting, Israeli forces took the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, Sinai and Gaza from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The war left the Arab world stunned and the Palestinians split into 3 main groups<sup>5</sup>:

- Palestinian refugees who had fled in 1948 fighting, living in camps in Arab states such as Jordan and Lebanon, who today total more than 3 million.
- Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, who also total around 3 million.
- Arabs living as citizens inside Israel proper, totaling around 1 million (out of Israel's population of 6 million).

One of the outcomes of Six Day War was creation of the Green Line; a provisional border of Israel as was established by the 1949 armistice agreements, before Israel conquered the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Figure 1). The Green Line is crossed by numerous dirt roads and it is impossible to patrol it. Many Palestinians take advantage of these roads to come to work illegally in Israel or to get between parts of the Palestinian administered territories without being subjected the wearisome and degrading checkpoints. Some also cross in order to carry out terror operations and theft.

Until 1993, Israel did not acknowledge Palestinian national rights or recognize the Palestinians as an independent party to the conflict. Israel refused to negotiate with the PLO, arguing that it was nothing but a terrorist organization, and insisting on dealing only with Jordan

or other Arab states. It rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state, insisting that Palestinians should be incorporated into the existing Arab states. This intransigence ended when Israeli representatives entered into secret negotiations with the PLO, which led to the Oslo Declaration of Principles.

The Declaration of the Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements is the main agreement signed between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. It was signed on White House lawn amid much fanfare in September 1993.

The Declaration of Principles was based on mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO. It established that Israel would withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, with additional withdrawals from further unspecified areas of the West Bank during a five-year interim period. During this period, the PLO formed a Palestinian Authority with "self-governing" powers in the areas from which Israeli forces were redeployed<sup>6</sup>.

However, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators failed to move on from these initial provisional to a permanent status agreement on issues including Jerusalem, borders and refugees. Frustration at the failure of the peace process to deliver what it promised, and the collapse of the last ditch talks chaired by former US President Bill Clinton at Camp David were partly to blame for the beginning of another Palestinian intifada, or rebellion against Israeli occupation, in September 2000. The deterioration of relations since the start of the intifada means that many Israelis and Palestinians now see the process that was begun in 1993 as dead.

Shortly after the current intifada began, an international fact-finding commission headed by former Senator George Mitchell recommended a cease-fire; confidence-building measures including a settlement freeze, and renewed peace talks. CIA director George Tenet was then dispatched to broker a cease-fire, which failed to take hold.

In May 2002, hopes briefly rose after an Arab League summit endorsed a Saudi peace plan offering to swap "normal relations" with Israel for a withdrawal to the 1967 lines, Palestinian state, and a return for Palestinian refugees<sup>7</sup>. But a Passover suicide bombing that killed 28 Israeli civilians prompted Israel to roll tanks into West Bank cities, round up suspected terrorists, and confine Arafat to his Ramallah headquarters for a month. The Bush administration, which had been wary of plunging in to mediate, sent Secretary of State Colin Powell on an unsuccessful April mission to broker a cease-fire. Following two more deadly suicide bombing in June 2002, Sharon announced that Israel would size Palestinian-ruled territory until terror attacks ended, and President Bush called for a new leadership to replace Arafat, carry out democratic reforms, and create a provisional Palestinian state. But despite the halting

diplomacy, Israelis and Palestinians are no closer to agreeing on how the violence started than to agreeing how it should end.

Therefore, the objectives of the Israeli Government today are: "Israel must defeat terrorism (The Palestinian Authority does not demonstrate the willingness to do it). Israel cannot negotiate under fire. Moreover, Israel has made painful concessions for peace and will demonstrate diplomatic flexibility to make peace again, but it requires first and foremost a reliable partner for peace"<sup>8</sup>.

#### US POSITION.

"In the situation the Palestinian people will grow more and more miserable. My vision is two states, living side by side in peace and security. There is simply no way to achieve that peace until all parties fight terror. Yet, at this critical moment, if all parties will break with the past and set out on a new path, we can overcome the darkness with the light of hope. Peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born"<sup>9</sup>.

The Palestinian people should elect new leaders; leaders not compromised by terror and build upon them a practicing democracy, based on tolerance and liberty. If the Palestinian people actively pursue these goals, America and the world will actively support their efforts, they will be able to reach agreement with Israel and Egypt and Jordan on security and other arrangements for independence.

When the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the US will support the creation of a Palestinian state whose borders and certain aspects of its sovereignty will be provisional until resolved as part of a final settlement in the Middle East.

A Palestinian state will never be created by terror – it will be built through reform. Reform must be more than cosmetic change, or veiled attempt to preserve the status quo. The reform will require entirely new political and economic institutions, based on democracy, market economics and action against terrorism.

Israel should support the emergence of a Palestinian state, to begin withdrawing from the occupied territories as reform is implemented – to positions they held prior to September 2000. Israel settlement activity in the occupied territories must stop.

Israel has a large stake in the success of a democratic Palestine. Permanent occupation threatens Israel's identity and democracy. A stable, peaceful Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel needs.

Today, Palestinian authorities are encouraging, not opposing, terrorism. This is unacceptable. The US will not support the establishment of a Palestinian state until its leaders



engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists and dismantle their infrastructure. This will require an externally supervised effort to rebuild and reform the Palestinian security services. The security must have clear lines of authority and accountability and a unified chain of command<sup>10</sup>.

#### **STICKING POINTS, ENDS, WAYS AND MEANS OF BOTH SIDES.**

Under the milestone Oslo agreement in 1993 between Israel and the Palestinians, the process of disagreement was divided into several stages to last for seven years. Jerusalem was relegated to the last phase, the “final status” talks which are also to tackle other thorny issues – Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements, security arrangements, and borders.

#### **JERUSALEM.**

It is a city with no river, no major airport, not much industry, little strategic significance and too little water. Yet of all the issues separating Jews and Palestinians, none approaches these fired by Jerusalem.

The former mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, said, “Jerusalem is the core of Jewish existence. This is everything that constitute the *raison d’etre* of the Jewish existence”.<sup>11</sup>

Among Palestinians, rare is the home, shop or office that does not prominently display a picture of the gilded Dome of the Rock, which has become the dominant symbol and icon of Palestinian nationhood. Every speech by Yassir Arafat includes an invocation of a future Palestinian state “with Holy Jerusalem as its capital”.

All of the negotiators, in both sides, know that Jerusalem is the most complex and delicate of all outstanding issues between Israelis and Arabs, and even the excruciating negotiations over Hebron, in 1996, have been only a minor skirmish in comparison with the contest for Jerusalem. All agreed that this issue remains to the end of the negotiating process; the struggle for the Holy City is already on and has loomed over all other issues.

For Israelis and Jewish people, Jerusalem is the city of David, the site of the great temples around which their religion developed, the spiritual home to which Jews vowed to “return next year” through millennia of dispersion, the spot where the Messiah will arrive. Jerusalem, argue the Jews, is the only capital their nation ever had, and it was never a capital for any others.

For the Israelis, the capture of the Old City and the sacred Western Wall in 1967 was a moment of profound religious and national importance and significant.

For the Palestinians, their displacement in Jerusalem served only to make the city into the central symbol of their evolving nationhood. In recent years, Arafat has increasingly challenged Jordan for control over Al Aksa Mosque.

The Palestinians brandish sheaves of international documents declaring Jerusalem an occupied territory and rejecting Israel's claims. But on the other hand, the Israelis have what they call "facts on the ground" – a majority of residents, a ring of settlements in and around East Jerusalem, total control.

Under the milestone Oslo agreement in 1993 between Israel and the Palestinians, the process of disagreement was divided into several stages to last for seven years. Jerusalem was relegated to the last phase, the "final status" talks which are also to tackle other thorny issues – Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements, security arrangements, and borders.

Beyond all these issues, over whether Jerusalem should be united, divided or shared is the fact that is already effectively segregated. Most of the 412 000 Jews live in West Jerusalem, the 167 000 Arabs in East Jerusalem. The lines are distinct since 1987, when a seven-year Palestinian resistance struggle broke out; many Jews have simply ceased entering East Jerusalem. The Old City is itself divided into four quarters – Jews, Muslim, Christian and Armenian – in addition to the 30-acre Temple Mount.

From the founding of the Israeli state until the 1967 war, the lines were borders, Jordan controlled East Jerusalem and the Old City, West Jerusalem was Israeli. The outside world sustained the notion that the city, or at least its holy sites, should be "internationalized".

After the 1967 war, all Jerusalem came under Israeli control. The UN and US have continued to officially regard East Jerusalem as occupied territory, and the status of the city as provisional. The Western European and US countries maintain separate consulates in East and West Jerusalem.

#### **Israeli Position.**

Jerusalem is far and away the holiest city for Jews. Israelis consider the whole of Jerusalem to be the symbolic heart of their state. Israel claims Jerusalem as its capital, though most countries instead recognize Tel Aviv as the seat of government. For most Israelis, the option of partitioning the city again is totally unacceptable.

#### **Palestinian Position.**

Jerusalem is Islam's third-holiest city and the idealized future capital of the Palestinian state. Palestinian historical and religious claims on parts of the city are deeply rooted. But

Yasser Arafat has recently suggested that East Jerusalem could serve as the compromise capital.

#### REFUGEES.

As a consequence of the fighting in Palestine/Israel between 1947 and 1949, over 700 000 Palestinian Arabs became refugees<sup>12</sup>. The precise number of refugees, and questions of responsibility for their exodus are sharply disputed.

Many Palestinians have claimed that most were expelled in accordance with a Zionist plan to rid the country of its non-Jewish inhabitants. The official Israeli position holds that the refugees fled on orders from Arab political and military leaders.

Today, about 3 million Palestinians live within the area, which is divided between the state of Israel, and the West Bank and Gaza; these latter areas were captured and occupied by Israel in 1967. Today, over 700 000 Palestinians are citizens of Israel, living inside the country's 1949 armistice borders. About 1.2 million live in the West Bank (including 200 000 in East Jerusalem) and about one million in the Gaza Strip. The remainder of the Palestinian people, perhaps another 3 million, lives in the Diaspora, outside the country they claim as their national homeland<sup>13</sup>.

The largest Palestinian diaspora community, approximately 1.3 million, is in Jordan. Many of them still live in refugee camps that were established in 1949, although others live in cities and towns. Lebanon and Syria also have large Palestinian populations; many of them still live in refugee camps. Many Palestinians moved to Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf countries to work, and some have moved to other parts of the Middle East or other parts of the world. Jordan is the only Arab state to grant citizenship to the Palestinians who live there. Palestinians in Arab states generally do not enjoy the same rights as the citizens of those states. The situation of the refugees in Lebanon is especially dire, as many Lebanese blame Palestinians for the civil war that wracked that country from 1975-91, and demand that they be resettled elsewhere in order for the Lebanese to maintain peace in their country.

Although many Palestinians still live in refugee camps and slums, others have become economically successful. Palestinians now have the highest per capita rate of university graduates in the Arab world. Their diaspora experience has contributed to a high level of politicization of all sectors of the Palestinian people.

In 1948, only about 150 000 Palestinian Arabs remained in the area that became the state of Israel. They were granted Israeli citizenship and the right to vote. But in many respects they remain second-class citizens, since Israel defined itself as the state of Jewish people.

Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel have had a difficult struggle to maintain their cultural and political identity in a state that officially regards expression of Palestinian or Arab national sentiment as subversive. Many Israeli Arabs have also come to understand that their political status as Israeli citizens and their protracted contact with Israeli society has differentiated them from other Palestinians. Although most of them support the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, few would pursue the possibility of relocating there if such a state comes into existence.

#### **Israeli Position.**

Aside from being a logistical nightmare, granting a right-of-return would dilute the Jewish population and threaten Israel's identity as a Jewish state. Though saying their refusal is "nonnegotiable," Israeli leaders have floated the idea of repatriating a symbolic number of refugees, and compensating the rest. Israelis also point out that after 1948, Arab states expelled their Jewish populations, and Israel resettled the refugees instead of putting them in camps.

#### **Palestinian Position.**

Many Palestinians have maintained old deeds to property as family heirlooms, passing down the dream of returning from generation to generation. The issue goes deeper than individual property claims for the Palestinians, who feel a collective right to their ancestral homeland and a deep anger at those who drove them from it.

#### **TERRITORIES.**

The West Bank and the Gaza Strip became distinct geographical units as a result of the 1949 armistice that divided the new Jewish state of Israel from other parties of mandate Palestine. From 1948-67, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was ruled by Jordan, which annexed the area in 1950 and extended citizenship to Palestinians living there. During this period, the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian military administration. In the 1967 war, Israel captured and occupied these areas, along with the Sinai Peninsula (from Egypt) and the Golan Heights (from Syria).

Israel established a military administration to govern the Palestinian residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Under this arrangement, Palestinians were denied many basic political rights and civil liberties, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of political association. Palestinian nationalism was criminalized as a threat to Israeli security, which meant that even displaying the Palestinian national colors was a punishable act. All aspects of Palestinian life were regulated, and often severely restricted by the Israeli military

administration. For example, Israel forbade the gathering wild thyme (za'atar), a basic element of Palestinian cuisine.

Israel has hundreds of settlements and permitted hundreds of thousands of its own Jewish citizens to move to the West Bank and Gaza (figure 2,3), despite this constituting a breach of international law. Israel has justified the violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and other international laws governing military occupation of foreign territory on the grounds that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are not technically “occupied” because they were never part of the sovereign territory of any state. Therefore, according to this interpretation, Israel is not a foreign “occupier” but a legal “administrator” of territory whose status remains to be determined. The international community has rejected the Israeli official position that the West Bank and Gaza are not occupied, and has maintained that international law should apply there<sup>14</sup>.

During the course of the last year, Israel has constructed a new “separation fence” between itself and the occupied territories in the West Bank. **Israel** believes that this is merely a security fence aimed at keeping Palestinian suicide bombers out of Israel and enhancing public safety. The fence could be, potentially, a future political border, and it is a symbol of the ultimate physical separation of Israeli and Palestinian territories. Some of the sections of the fence do not run along the Green Line (figure 1) – the administrative boundary formally used to separate Israel from the West Bank since 1949. In some places, the fence has been pushed a few miles east to include on the Israeli side as many Israeli settlements as possible. **The Palestinians claim** that the fence is much more than a physical construction. It radiates a message to those who are excluded and tell them categorically, “You belong there, and we belong here”.<sup>15</sup> More than that, they claim that the line of the fence could be, consequently, the border of the future Palestinian state, and it created unilaterally, by Israel.



FIGURE 1 THE GREEN LINE

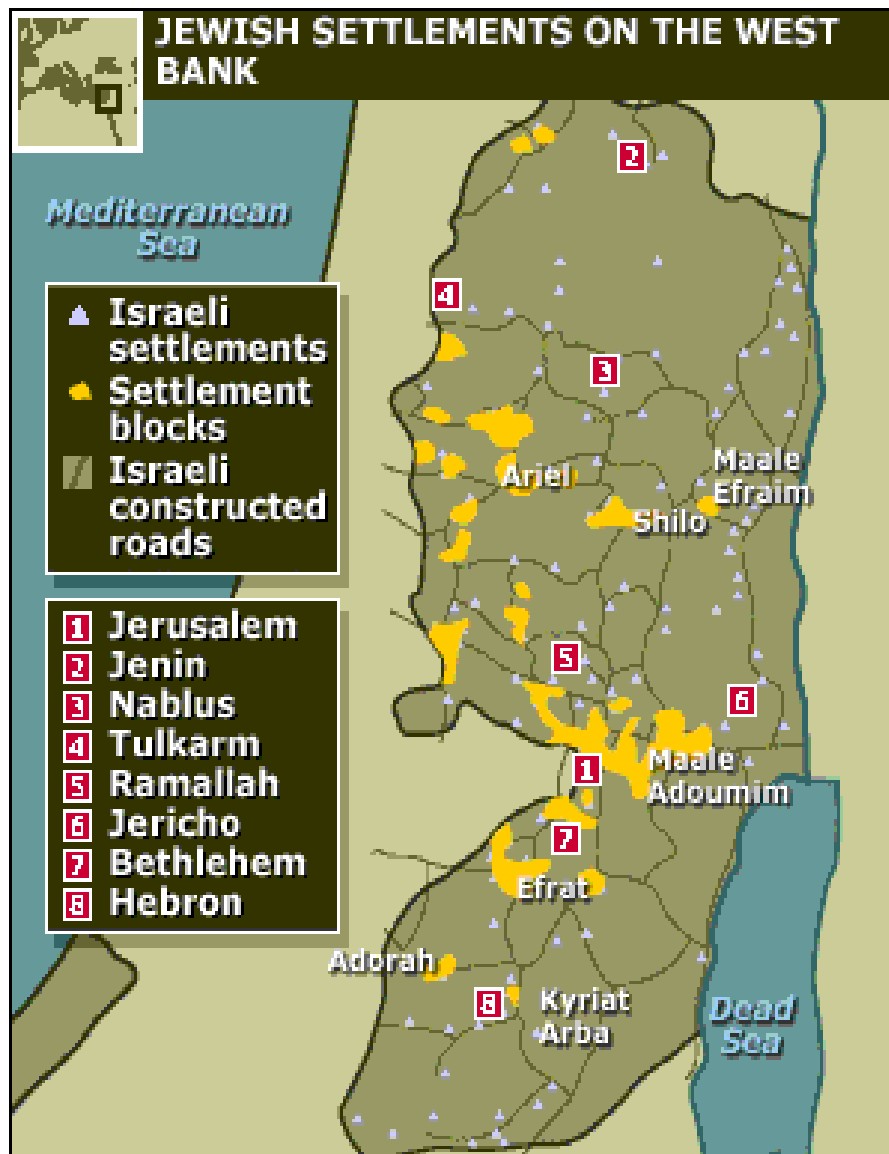


FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



**Israeli position.**

For Israelis, settlements have helped both absorb Jewish refugees (from the Soviet Union, for example) and provided a first line of defense against the Palestinians. Israel has retained authority over 60 percent of West Bank territory. Many Israelis consider the settlements perfectly legal: they say no one has the right to stop Jews from living within Israel's biblical borders.

**Palestinian position.**

Settlements are a sore point. These Jewish oases in the middle of Arab territory, developed illegally and tacitly condoned by the United States, are seen as an instrument of ongoing occupation and threat to the Palestinians. The settlement question becomes even more crucial within the framework of a proposed Palestinian state, as it will either have to exclude the settlements, or include provisions for the Israelis to leave their new homes.

**POSSIBLE OUTCOMES – OPTIONS OF SOLUTION.**

Inside of Israel, Jews are a dominant majority of 82:18 percent. In Jerusalem, Jews lead by a 53:47 ratio. When we add Israel and the occupied territories together, including Jerusalem, the proportion becomes 64:36. And since Palestinians have more children on average than Israelis, the ratio would approach 50:50 in time.

To a large extent Jews and Palestinians are geographically concentrated. Most Jews live in Israel and most of Palestinians live in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. There are exceptions of course. Many Jews live in the new ring of suburbs around Jerusalem, and in the new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. And many Arabs live inside of Israel, particularly in Galilee, including Nazareth, and in the Negev desert in the south.

If we look down the road 25 years, there are five possibilities come to mind:

**STATUS QUO.**

At the present time Israel controls most of the territory of Palestine. There is considerable fighting in the Palestinian area, where the Palestinians are resisting Israeli rule. Israel maintains a very high level of military activity in these occupied areas. The Palestinians seem determined to have their independence, and the Israelis do not seem able to defeat them. Israel has taken much Palestinian land for Jewish use and has placed Jewish settlers inside of the Palestinian territory. The US continues to provide considerable economic, military, and diplomatic support to Israel. The Palestinians are spread around the Arab world and seem unable to challenge Israel in any military sense. While the Arab states make speeches on behalf of the Palestinians they

seem unwilling to use their military forces against Israel. For the time being Israel seems capable of defeating any combination of Arab armies. Israel also continues to build the “separating wall” and by that, determine the borderline between the West Bank and Israeli territory. Many Israelis believe this is the most likely outcome.

#### UNIFICATION OF LANDS AND PEOPLE – BINATIONAL STATE

Unite Israelis and Palestinians into one country with equal rights for all and with a government that favored no religious or ethnic group. According to this, Israel would face a threat that could spell the end of the Jewish state. Within a few years, there will be a Palestinian majority between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. The opposition is so strong and emotional that seems there is no need to even define what kind of regime it would be and what the term “one state for two peoples” might mean.

#### TWO STATES FOR TWO PEOPLES.

In 1947 the UN proposed partitioning Palestine into two states, one Jewish, one Arab. The UN assumed that Jews and Palestinians could never live peacefully in a single country and that partition was the only option. Israel accepted the resolution, but the Palestinian opposed it. At the long term, today, it seems as real solution. I will elaborate this further.

#### EXPULSION OF THE PALESTINIANS.

Expulsion is a radical outcome, but some experts think it might happen. The Jewish settlements are in place in the occupied territories and have taken much of the Palestinian land. They could be used as assault points on the Palestinian population. The efforts to work out a solution failed, Israel’s leaders might decide that the threat of an uprising is so great that the dangers of expulsion are less than the dangers of not expelling. Also, some Israelis favor an effort to get Palestinians to leave through economic pressure: denying them jobs or a way to make a living. This phenomenon could, dramatically, reduce the Palestinian population in the territories. The remaining Palestinians would be a much smaller minority who might be kept under control, and Israel might annex the occupied territories. I would argue that this solution seems unfeasible, because of interference from the US, UN and the EU in the area’s problems.

#### ELIMINATION OF ISRAEL.

Radical Palestinians and even some Arabs who are not Palestinian feel that Israel has treated its subjects and its neighbors badly and cannot be trusted. They reject the idea of a Jewish state in the midst of the Arab world as something that should not be allowed, If at some time in the future, radical government comes to power in Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and other

countries, the situation could become different from today. And if the Arab states were to form a common military alliance, they might defeat and conquer Israel. Many Jews could be forced to flee, with the remainder living under Palestinian rule. I would argue that this solution is unlikely. In the past, when Israel was smaller and weaker than today they couldn't do it, so how would they defeat Israel today? Moreover, each country from the Arab states has a different interest and this phenomenon interdicts the unified objective.

## **ASSESSMENT**

It should be a solution of the conflict only if the both parties would recognize that the situation, which prevails today in the region, is leading to a dead-end. Resolution of this conflict could reflect all over the Middle East, and it could bring peace and tranquility for one of the most complex region over the world. It could reflect on prolong religious struggle between Jews and Arabs. Both sides pay an expensive price along the bloody discord - human life.

Therefore, both sides should pursue, hand in hand, to the third outcome – Two states living side by side.

The “road map”, combined with “Geneva Accord”, with a mutual commitment and obligation to get rid of the terror groups, are an answer to resolve the problems. Actually, both sides know that the alternative is worse for both of them. In the context of two independent states, an agreed resolution of all the issues is necessary for achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace between them. It will also be central in stability building and development in the region.

The solution for the sticking issues could be a patchwork with agreement and compromises:

**Jerusalem:** A Holy City for all religions. The sides would commit to safeguard the character, holiness, and freedom of worship in the city. It could be a capital of the two states. The parties would establish an inter-faith body to act as a consultative body on religious matters. The municipal city would be conducted by an international group including members of Israel, Palestinian, US, and other, as the parties agreed<sup>16</sup>.

**Refugees:** The refugees should be entitled to compensation for loss of property. The refugees may choose to move to one of the options below:

- The state of Palestine.
- Areas in Israel, which are being transferred to Palestine.
- Third countries, in accordance with the willingness of the receiving stake and the Palestinians wishes.

- Present Host countries.

The international community shall participate fully in the comprehensive resolution of the refugee problem.

**Territory:** The international border between the states of Palestine and Israel shall be based on the June 4<sup>th</sup> 1967 lines, with agreed adjustments. Israel shall withdraw from the Palestinian areas, and Palestine shall assume responsibility. The states shall respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence. It shall be agreed of timetable for termination of settlement evacuation. The states will establish a corridor linking the West Bank and Gaza Strip<sup>17</sup>.

**Security:** Israel demands the demilitarization of the Palestinian forces. The states shall base their security relation on cooperation, mutual trust, good neighborly relations, and protection of their joint interests. The states shall work together with their neighbors and the international community to build a secure and stable Middle East, free from weapons of mass destruction, in the context of a comprehensive, and stable peace. The states will fight together against terrorism; they shall pursue public policies accordingly. The states shall maintain ongoing consultation, cooperation, and exchange of information between their respective security forces.

Only mutual trust, understanding, dignity and good willing of peace relationship could put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, and to live in peaceful coexistence. If the parties would be induced to build trust relation between the leaders and people, it would be a good base for the ongoing peace process.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> George Bush Speech on "Israel-Palestinian Settlement", June 2002.
- <sup>2</sup> Summary of UN General Assembly Resolution 181 – November 29, 1947.
  - A Jewish State covering 56.47% of Mandatory Palestine (excluding Jerusalem), with a population of 498.000 Jews and 325.000 Arabs.
  - An Arab state covering 43.53% of Mandatory Palestine (excluding Jerusalem), with 807 000 Arab Inhabitants and 10 000 Jewish inhabitants.
  - An international trusteeship regime in Jerusalem, where the population was 100.000 Jews and 105.000 Arabs.
- <sup>3</sup> Wallach, "Not on a Silver Platter", Jerusalem, Carta (2000), pp. 52, 54.
- <sup>4</sup> O'Brien, "Counter terrorism: Lessons From Israel", Strategic Review (1985), p. 41.
- <sup>5</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, "Flashpoint: Israeli – Palestinian Conflict". Terrorism: Q & A, December, 2003.
- <sup>6</sup> BBC News, "Key Document, "1993 Declaration of Principle", November 2003.
- <sup>7</sup> Middle East Information Center: "The War on Terrorism" Accessed 21, November, 2002.
- <sup>8</sup> Ariel Sharon interview, "The Way Forward in the Middle East", New York Times, June, 9 2002.
- <sup>9</sup> George Bush Speech, "Israel-Palestinian Settlement", June 2002.
- <sup>10</sup> George Bush Speech, "Israel-Palestinian Settlement." June, 24 2002.
- <sup>11</sup> Serge, Schmemmann, "Jerusalem Is the Heart of Most Middle East Dispute," New York Times, October, 96.
- <sup>12</sup> The Middle East Research and Information Project: "Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict". December, 2003.
- <sup>13</sup> Middle East Information Center, "The Palestinian Refugees". December 2002.
- <sup>14</sup> Eli Aminov, "The New Middle East", Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem, Dec, 1995.
- <sup>15</sup> David, Newman, "Barrier to Peace at Israeli Border". Los Angeles Times, July, 28 2003.
- <sup>16</sup> "The Geneva Accord for Peace Between Israel and Palestine", November, 2003.
- <sup>17</sup> "The Geneva Accord for Peace Between Israel and Palestine", November, 2003.



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